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ABSTRACT

Sensitivity training groups rarely have been conducted amcng people of low income. A modification of the laboratory training method, here called the "participant group method," was used with low-income Black parents of Head Start children to demonstrate under what conditions participant groups might be helpful to parents and their children. Eight different groups, each met twice a week for eight weeks within the context of either helping the child with language skills at home or helping the parents with their problems of child-rearing. Parent trainers worked in teams of two, including a mother from the community. Both fathers and mothers participated. Most groups succeeded in engaging the parents' participation in child-rearing or related discussions, as judged from the attendance and the group process data. In conclusion, the participant group method seems to be a very effective vehicle to deliver community-clinical psychological services directly to low-income parents for educational, remedial, and preventive functions regarding their preschool children. (Author)

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A Narrative of Head Start Parents in Participant Groups[1]

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Cover Page

Footnote 2 (Page 1):

Requests for reprints should be sent to Paul Wohlford, Ph.D., Director of Psychological Services, Head Start, Office of Child Development, P.O. Box 1182, Washington, D.C. 20013.
This article was written by Dr. Wohlford in his private capacity prior to his present position. No official support or endorsement by the Office of Child Development or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is intended or should be inferred. The author wishes to caution the reader: The author was--and still is--biased favorably toward both participant group methods for effecting prosocial behavioral change (e.g., Wohlford and Stern, 1968; Wohlford, 1969, 1970) and careful research to help to understand such change (Wohlford, 1971a, 1971b). He values both highly.

A Narrative of Head Start Parents in Participant Groups[1]

Abstract

Sensitivity training groups rarely have been conducted among people of low income. A modification of the laboratory training method, here called the "participant group method," was used with low-income Black parents of Head Start children to demonstrate under what conditions participant groups might be helpful to parents and their children. Eight different groups, each met twice a week for eight weeks within the context of either helping the child with language skills at home, or helping the parents with their problems of child-rearing. Parent trainers worked in teams of two, including a mother from the community. Both fathers and mothers participated. Most groups succeeded in engaging the parents' participation in child-rearing or related discussions, as judged from the attendance and the group process data. In conclusion, the participant group method seems to be a very effective vehicle to deliver community-clinical psychological services directly to low-income parents for educational, remedial, and preventive functions regarding their preschool children.

A Narrative of Head Start Parents in Participant Groups[1]

Contradictory reports on an anecdotal level abound concerning whether there are any effective methods in working meaningfully with people of low income. If the sensitivity training (encounter) group is this century's most important social invention as Rogers (1969) recently asserted, one might expect group methods to have been employed systematically in antipoverty programs. Surprisingly, there are few reports of endeavors using sensitivity training or other groups directly with people of low income in spite of the appropriateness of such applications (Wohlford, 1970).

Zurcher (1969) described systematic observations of stages of development in poverty program neighborhood action committees, noting that these groups combined elements of all three Tuckman-classed settings: therapy groups, human relations groups, and natural or laboratory groups. Sensitivity or human relations training with low-income groups have been occasionally with adults (Culver, Dunham, Edgerton, & Edgerton, 1969), with aggressive junior high school students (Rueveni, 1971), and, more widely, indirectly with those who serve low-income groups such as para-professionals and teachers (Carkhuff & Griffin, 1970, 1971).

With a rationale provided by Hunt (1969) and others, Head Start and other early childhood programs for low-income clients have the responsibility to involve the parents of the preschool children. Indeed, the Head Start official policies urge or require the involvement of parents at various levels (Office of Economic Opportunity, 1967, 1968; Office of Child Development, 1970).[3]

To directly involve low-income adults in an educationally oriented program in Head Start or public schools is an undertaking that faces formidable obstacles. People who struggle in poverty are generally alienated from middle-class society, its agencies, and, especially, the schools, where many of them probably had negative personal experiences. If this is true, then the generalization of the negative

experience would be especially detrimental to their involvement on any level, including the passive attendance at meetings in school buildings which themselves may be aversive to the parents. Moreover, a program that attempts to work with low-income parents of preschool children to improve the relevant behavior in the parents' interaction with their children faces another requirement. Such behavior is among the most deeply entrenched and least susceptible to change, and so such an intervention program would have to use relatively powerful methods.

Systematic group methods have been used to some extent with parents on school-related variables, although not with low-income populations, as reviewed in detail elsewhere (Wohlford, 1970). Nechin (1966) led a time-limited, small group of low-income young mothers of three- and four-year olds, and found mothers eager to receive child-rearing information. In two other projects low-income parents met in time-limited, small groups with apparent success in creating a stable group atmosphere. Both projects combined informal instruction with open-ended discussion of dynamic issues in parent-child relations. In one project, the instruction concerned the Eriksonian Eight Ages of Development (Cook, 1968), and in the other, language development (Wohlford & Stern, 1968). In the latter project, part of each meeting was devoted to the practical demonstration of various things parents can do to expand their child's cognitive world. Another part of each meeting used an unstructured, process-centered, participant small group method which appeared to be a potentially useful technique to evaluate and, where necessary, to intervene in the possible detrimental parent-child interactions. With this method, the other group members provide the reference group and basic impetus for change.

Ultimately, a program that does not involve its participants has to fail. Low-income parents seemed more likely to become involved in small groups composed of <u>others in the same situation</u>, than to become involved in other kinds of programs. The experience of conducting psychotherapy with low income people indicates that

group sessions are more effective than individual sessions (Christmas, 1966). There are various reasons that might explain this phenomenon: attitudes toward authority; social comparisons processes; following the therapist's model; and differences in the communication pattern between middle-class, middle-class patient and therapist combinations, on the one hand, and low-income, middle-class patient and therapist combinations, on the other hand (Frank, 1961). Whatever these reasons may be, it is felt useful to exploit this possible source of gain.

Historically, the oldest small group method is the T-group method, sensitivity training group, or human relations laboratory. These methods, as well as a modification used in the present project, will be referred to generically as the participant group method.[4] The particular strength of the participant group method is that it enables the group members to focus on, and perhaps modify, their interpersonal behavior. Several aspects of this method seemed especially appropriate for the purpose of working with low-income parents, including task orientation, use of trainers as role models, open communication, cooperative feedback, and democratic group process with no hidden agenda. The appropriateness of this approach is described more fully elsewhere (Wohlford, 1970).

Through participation in this type of group experience, parents should become aware of, and modify their interpersonal behavior moving in the direction of having "ideal" relationships, and, in turn, creating these kinds of relationships with their children. Incidentally, parent groups which use such participant group methods as these coincide both in rationale and method with the aims of the Community Action Program and the new Head Start guidelines for parent involvement (Office of Child Development, 1970).

In summary, in spite of the obvious importance of parental attitudes and behavior, few programs have been successful in engaging low-income parents in any meaningful way. The use of participant groups offers some promise of success.

However, there is almost a complete lack of knowledge about many basic parameters of participant groups of low-income parents. That is, besides the fundamental issue of whether changing parents' attitudes and behavior would change their children's behavior, a number of intermediate objectives should be realized in order to assess the feasibility of participant group methods. First, could a large proportion of such parents, approaching 100% of a given panel of parents, be attracted to attend group meetings regularly, and, if so, under what conditions? That is, would mothers without husbands attend as well as married mothers? Would fathers as well as mothers attend? If the fathers attended the group, would that influence the nature of the group's effects on the mothers? Finally, would there be a differential influence from the group's structure and content, either a rather structured group with language development content, or an unstructured group to focus on group process and discuss child-raising or anything the parents wanted?

The remainder of this paper describes a field intervention research project, termed the Parent Project, which systematically investigated the feasibility of using participant group methods to realize the above intermediate objectives, as well as to gather data on the fundamental issue of whether participant groups would be effective in changing parents' attitudes and behaviors which would, in turn, change their children's behavior. To assess such changes, a variety of cognitive, personality, and interpersonal variables were assessed in both the parents and their children both before and after the parents received participant group training (pretest-intervention-posttest design).

The full context of the Parent Project, including its field intervention research rationale, systematic variation of the groups, and description of the participating parents, is presented elsewhere (Wohlford, 1970, 1971a, 1971b). This study's focus on precise effects of parental group intervention alone upon the parents' and their children's behavior, may render this study's results particularly

valuable with regard to certain basic research and field application questions, as well as rather circumscribed with regard to other possible questions. Its unique value may be seen, for instance, in its possible implications for the Office of Child Development's recently announced Home Start program, in which the preschool child may never participate in a center with other children such as in Head Start, but in which the sole or primary intervention is via the parents (Zigler, 1971).

However, the Parent Project's design also demanded using the children of non-participating parents as controls for the children of participating parents. Since the two groups of children would have been intermingled in a Head Start class with the same teacher, we would have contaminated the control group of children if we would have directly involved the teacher in the parent group. That is, changes or lack of changes in the children then could have resulted from either the influence of the parents or the influence of the teacher. Yet the incremental value of directly including Head Start teachers or other staff in parent groups is obviously of great potential, and will be discussed later. While we did not include the teachers in the Parent Project groups as a part of the present intervention strategy, we encouraged greater contact between the parents and the center staff upon the request of the parents or teachers and whenever special intervention was clinically imperative.

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The data from the total Parent Project fall into five main categories: The parents' attendance at the meetings; the group process of the eight groups; the effect on the community as seen in their post-group attitudes and willingness to participate in future meetings; objective changes in the parents; and objective changes in their children. The first two issues, the parents' overall response as seen in their attendance and the group process, are presented in the present paper. The latter three issues are presented elsewhere (Wohlford, 1971a, 1971b).

Intervention strategy. The underlying theory of the Parent Project's inter-
vention strategy is presented in two ways: First, schematically in Lewinian-type

diagrams, and, second, according to input, intraprocess, and outcome variables.

First, the usual entry into public school of a young child from a low-income family may be represented by his departure from his subcultural milieu, confrontation of the rather impenetrable social class barrier, and solitary entry into the public school which is an institution of the dominant social class (middle-class; see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

The burden is clearly upon the young child to be tested by the double impermeable barriers and fail to accommodate, or succeed, but possibly at the expense of incorporating two conflicting sets of social-cultural values with the consequent internal stress. Figure 2 presents the Parent Project's intervention strategy which reverses the burden, placing it back on adults--first, the public school or Head Start, next on the Parent Group Trainers, then, the neighborhood parents' group, and, finally, on the individual parents for their own family. The shaded areas and numbers in Figure 2 represent the actual processes in sequence: (1) "The initial

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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public school-Head Start contract, (2) Head Start's preservice training and inservice supervision of the Parent Group Trainers, (3) the neighborhood parents' groups conducted by the Parent Group Trainers, (4) the individual parents strengthen their own family interaction, including their preschool child, and (5) the preschool child is better equipped--technically, pre-accommodated--for his entry into Head Start and public school. Finally, Figure 3 presents the goal of the interventions: Moving all units into closer harmony with each other, or technically, functional inter-

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Insert Figure 3 about here

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dependence, including the child, his family, the neighborhood parent group, Head

Start, and the school which now has become a responsive institution of the whole community whose impermeable barrier (solid line in Figure 1) has now become permeable, flexible, and ready to accomodate itself to the needs of the children (dotted line in Figure 3).

Second, the underlying theory of the Parent Project's intervention strategy may be conceptualized according to input, intraprocess, and outcome variables, as seen in Figure 4. This conceptualization is based on a post-hoc analysis, so no provision could have been made to investigate systematically all the "variables" listed. Rather, this conceptualization is offered here to clarify the Project for the reader, and as possible guidance for future projects.

Method

Five Head Start centers in all-Black areas of the center of Miami, Florida, were identified as participating centers according to the design summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

On the basis of the preliminary estimates, eight different participant groups were planned in the 1969-1970 school year, four in the Fall and four in the Spring. Each team of two Parent Trainers conducted two groups, a Language Development group and a Sensitivity-Discussion group. Each group was required to choose its own particular direction within the context of either Language Development or Sensitivity Discussion. Each group was to have about 12 to 15 parents, and be intensive, with one and one-half hour meetings twice a week for eight weeks.

Parent Trainers

The Parent Trainers are the key of the entire Parent Project, just as classroom teachers are the key of educational systems. Thus, the Parent Trainers' selection, training, and supportive supervision are presented next in some detail. However, equally important as each of these three elements but more difficult to describe,

are the interrelationships among these elements--the Trainers' selection, training, and supervision--and their commitment to the parents that arises as a kind of epiphenomenon when the first three elements are realized. That is, the effectiveness of the Parent Trainers seems to have been a function of all three elements organized into a single, interdependent operation, and changing any element might have greatly changed the outcome.

Staff selection. Four teams of Parent Trainers were selected to participate in preservice training in the summer preceding the year of actual parent groups. Each team was composed of one person who was a graduate student in psychology or education (one Black female, one Black male, two white males); and one person who could be identified as a mother from the community being served (four Black females).

To emphasize the importance of the Trainer as a role model, we sought Trainers who exemplified stability, responsibility, and interpersonal commitment to training the parent groups by attendance and punctuality at preservice training meetings. Self-selection during the preservice training permitted the identification of the Trainers with the maximum motivation. The initially selected four graduate students completed preservice training and the full year of the actual parent meetings. However, nine individuals rotated through the other four positions due to trial-and-error self-selection and certain unavoidable contingencies. Fortunately, the staff turnover largely occurred during the preservice training and not the parent groups proper, but, unfortunately, several of the final Black female Trainers received none of the preservice training whatsoever.. After the project started in the school year, seven of the eight groups' Parent Trainer teams were stable for the duration of the group, as may be seen in Table 1. Six of the eight Trainers were Black, and five were females.

Staff training.[5] The preservice training of the Parent Trainers made use of a specially prepared training manual (Wohlford. 1969), and had five phases: First, in the Summer of 1969, a regular sensitivity training laboratory was conducted for the Parent Trainers themselves with focus on personal growth, rather than group dynamics or leadership skills per se. Inevitably, white-Black issues arose, and somewhat surprisingly, younger-older generation issues also arose. The group experience greatly facilitated the next phase, as the Trainers felt a good deal of warmth for each other, cohesion, and enthusiasm about the Project. Second, the

language development training made extensive use of the Parent Trainers' Manual (Wohlford, 1969), most of which is devoted to language development concepts, techniques, and materials that are appropriate for parents to use with their preschool children in the home. There were demonstrations of various materials and practice curricula for the parent meetings. Third, the Trainers considered the common objectives of the two types of parent group method, and differences between the two methods.[6] Often the Trainers' intense discussion about the objectives generated a feeling of autonomy and sense of perspective, and then the Trainers themselves formulated a list of objectives at three levels: the ultimate objectives for the children, the second level objectives for the parents and the primary objectives for the Trainers themselves (see Table 2). Fourth, the assignment of

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Insert Table 2 about here

Trainers to teams of two was done by self-selection as much as possible. Finally, just prior to the actual parent meetings, an additional day was devoted to each of the two methods as a brush-up and review. By this time, the Trainers had met many parents through the interviews and evaluations of the pretest research phase, so that the group experience was much more tangible, and the Trainers began to deal concretely with anticipated situations.

Staff supervision. During the course of the parent group meetings, each of the four teams of Trainers met together for weekly consultation or supervision which was facilitated by the tape-recordings of all meetings.

Parent Group Meetings

As additional objectives to enhance the quality of the program, every effort was made to fit the parent groups into the context of the neighborhood in order: (1) To establish a solid working relationship between the parents and their center. Thus, it is necessary to attain an additional, very pragmatic provisional goal: To

establish a trusting relationship that would be stable and solid enough to work on deeply entrenched behavioral patterns. (2) To fit into the context of the other Head Start Programs such as the monthly parent meetings. (3) To facilitate group cohesiveness and emotional involvement in the group by capitalizing on pre-existing relationships among neighbors. (4) To foster the maintenance of such changes as did occur in the group by assuring some form of continued contact among group members after the termination of the actual groups.

The schedule for the parent meetings was determined in part by the individual evaluations in the overall research design of pretest--intervention--posttest. Thus, the first series of four groups were held from November, 1969, to January, 1970, with a two-week break at the Christmas holidays, rather than promptly in September or October to November without interruption, as would have been ideal to gain and maintain maximum impetus. The second series of four other groups, using the same pairs of Parent Trainers but with different parents, ran from February to April, 1970, without interruption.

To investigate the fathers' participation as an independent variable in its effect on the mothers' participation, fathers were invited to the parent meetings in some centers but not in others. Two principles were maintained: Maximum participation in each center and equal opportunity for all parents within a center. Since a significant portion of the families in the participating centers (more than one-third) had no father in the home, if all parents had been invited to meetings, mothers would probably have out-numbered fathers by a wide margin. In this case, fathers would have been unlikely to participate, would have lost interest, and not have returned to subsequent meetings. Furthermore, mothers without husbands might have been sensitive to husband-wife discussions in a general parent group, and have constituted an inhibiting influence on such husband-wife topics. Additionally, mothers without husbands probably have some unique problems; a group of others in

the same situation seemed potentially very useful to elicit discussion about these problems.

Therefore, in three of the five centers (see Table 1), there were two sets of parent groups: One group to which husband-wife pairs were invited whenever there was a husband in the home, and the other group made up of all remaining mothers, i.e., those mothers without husbands. In the remaining two centers constituting the other two groups, all the mothers, including those with and without husbands, but none of their husbands, were invited to participate.

Initially, two groups were planned to be strictly voluntary, and six groups were planned to have each parent paid five dollars per session for their participation. However, the less than optimal participation of the voluntary group in the first series prompted the rejection of including a voluntary group in the second series. Hence, seven of the eight groups were on a paid basis, including attendance both at the parent group meetings and at parent evaluations. In addition, baby-sitting and transportation were provided to parents who needed it.

Results

The results of the Parent Project to be presented here are the criteria of parental attendance at the parent group meetings and a distillation of the group process or content. Parental attendance at the group meetings and the actual group process are distinguishable, but in a sense they are inseparable, as examples will illustrate. Parental attendance is necessarily primary because if the parents do not come to the meetings, there can be no group and no group process. However, once the parents are present at the meeting, what occurs, the group process, in part determines whether they will return to the next meeting.

Parental Attendance at the Parent Group Meetings

Table 3 summarizes the parents' actual attendance at parent group meetings.

Insert Table 3 about here

The first four columns of Table 3 give the identifying information: The group and number of the center, the method, and the parents who were invited. Six of the eight groups ran their full duration of 15 or 16 meetings, and the other two groups approached it. The next three major columns give the number of parents invited, the number attending at least one meeting, and the number attending regularly; i.e., at least half of the scheduled meetings. Most of the participating parents attended regularly (70 of 119). As seen in the second column from the right, the median number of meetings attended by the mothers was nine. The final column, median attendance at meetings, indicates the degree of interest in the typical meeting. The relative cohesion of a group may be determined on the basis of the median attendance at meetings divided by the number attending at least one meeting. The cohesion ranged from a high in Group 2 (11/13) to a low in Group 1 (3/12).

A comparison of the mothers' and fathers' attendance. Of all 155 natural mothers of five-year olds at the five centers who were invited, 95 attended at least one meeting, and of these, 60 attended regularly. In other words, 60 mothers (39%) never attended a meeting, 35 mothers (23%) attended meetings occasionally, and 60 mothers (39%) attended regularly. Thus, more than half of the mothers (61%) attended at least some of the meetings, and about two-thirds of these attended regularly.

The comparable percentage of the fathers' attendance is not as great according to the available figures. Fathers were invited to the parent group meetings in only three of the five centers. Of the 61 fathers presumably invited, 37 fathers (61%) never attended the meetings, 14 fathers (23%) attended meetings occasionally, and 10 fathers (16%) attended regularly. If the father's data are accurate, then the proportion of invited fathers who failed to attend at least one meeting (61%) is significantly greater than the proportion of mothers who attended who failed to attend (39%; $\chi^2 = 10.603$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$, 2-tailed test).

However, we estimate that the number of fathers presumably in the homes at Centers 3 and 4, and hence invited, may have been inflated from 5 to 20 fathers. The reason is that these centers are a part of the public school system, and mothers may tend to claim a husband (e.g., "Mr. and Mrs. L. Brown"), in registering a child in a public school. If the actual total number of fathers were 45, then the percentages of the fathers would not be significantly different from the mothers' percentages: Never attending, 48%; occasionally 30%; and regularly, 22%. Furthermore, in considering those 95 mothers and 24 fathers who attended at least one meeting, the proportion of mothers who attended regularly was no greater than the proportion of fathers who attended regularly ($\underline{X}$=0.016, $\underline{df}$=1, $\underline{p}$ is n.s., 2-tailed test). In sum, according to available information, proportionately more mothers attended at least one meeting than fathers, but of those parents attending at least once, there was no difference between fathers and mothers in the frequency of attendance.

Other comparisons. In terms of attendance as a function of the group content, all four of the Language Development groups had good attendance, but only two of the four Sensitivity Discussion groups had solid success. Thus, there appeared to be a trend toward a difference, but the difference was not significant or conclusive.

In the comparison of the first and second series, two of the four groups in the first series were successful while all four groups in the second series were. In the least successful group, Group 4, Mothers Without Husbands, there were never enough mothers present to allow full use of the Sensitivity-Discussion Method. The group that had next least limited success was Group 1, which had Sensitivity-Discussion on a voluntary basis. In that group, the mothers attended irregularly, showing some interest in participating, and seemingly involved when they were there, but failing to sustain their involvement to allow the group to ever become cohesive. The two other first series groups had good attendance and both used the Language

Development Method.

In the first series, the Trainers were completely inexperienced in conducting groups of this nature, and there was an unavoidable two-week Christmas holiday interruption. As expected, there was a noticeable drop in the attendance at the meetings following the holidays. Thus, special efforts were made to personally contact absent parents to remind them the meetings had started again, and these efforts were effective. In the second series, the Trainers had some experience and a schedule free from major interruptions. Also from the first series experience, we were able to estimate the probable attendances more accurately and to make necessary adjustments. E.g., three additional mothers without husbands from Center 4 were invited to Group 8, providing a larger group. The median attendance at the four groups in the second series were 7,7,9.5, and 13 as opposed to 2,3,9.5, and 11, in the first series.

In summary, six of the eight groups were unqualified successes, according to the attendance data. Both of the other groups had certain problems, but even these continued with some participation for their planned period. As both of these were in the first series, and both used Sensitivity-Discussion, it will be of some interest to note whether the Trainers' inexperience, the group content, both together, or some other variable like the centers chosen, was responsible for the unevenness in attendance when we next turn the Trainers' own summaries of what occurred in the group meetings.

Group Process and Content

The entire series of small group meetings totaled over 190 hours (approximately 8 groups x 8 weeks per group x 2 sessions per week x 1 1/2 hours per session). The sessions were tape-recorded, so it would be possible to derive objective measures of group interaction from these tapes. However, such a process is extremely costly, and was not done for the present report. The following narrative summary of the eight groups based on the Trainers' reports which were made following each meeting

and discussed in weekly supervision, with additional clarification provided by the tape-recordings if necessary.

Trainers AB: Groups 1 and 5

Group 1, the only voluntary group, used the Sensitivity-Discussion method with all mothers. Though the median attendance of the group was only three, a total of seven mothers attended two or more meetings, indicating some interest but little commitment. The Trainers were a graduate student with some group experience with middle-class clients and a Social Service Aide with no prior group experience. The group immediately began with a survey of problems the mothers were having with their preschool children, including running away, eating problems, vomiting, nose-bleeding, and passing out; also, a mother mentioned that one of her children had choked to death. The Trainers dealt with these enormous reality-based situations in a rather nondirective, or passive fashion. Rather than deal with individual or cummulative feelings aroused in the group on hearing about these hardships, the Trainers permitted the mothers' one-by-one recitation of their problems. Not surprisingly, several of these mothers with the most serious problems failed to return after the first meeting or two.

In this case and others, the inservice supervision, occurring after-the-fact, could not do more than help the Trainers modify their behavior for future meetings, and follow-up on what already occurred. Most importantly, the Trainer who was also the Center's Social Service Aide individually discussed the meetings thoroughly and helped with the problems of mothers who had failed to return. E.g., a mother whose husband was recently jailed was helped to enroll at a neighborhood health center.

After the first several meetings, the Trainers shifted from their nondirective stance to a more active, structured, problem-solving approach. For example, the Trainers encouraged a mother whose daughter had vomitting and nose-bleeding without a medical reason, to spend at least some time alone with the girl every day when she was well. In a few weeks, the symptoms disappeared. In a follow-up interview six months later, this mother profusely thanked the Parent Project for helping her daughter who had continued to be well.

Mothers gradually introduced problems with their husbands, and, midway through the series, some mothers discussed their own personal problems, fears, and worries. One mother in particular was very disturbed, appearing delusional and to hallucinate at times, and she dominated the group. The group tolerated her deviant behavior because of the small number of mothers present and the Trainers' reluctance to confront her. The Trainers' reluctance seemed to be related both to this mother's powerful role in the political structure of the center and the Trainers' personalities. In the final meeting, the three most loyal attenders expressed much positive feeling for what they derived, but requested meetings with teachers to allow the mothers to learn what their children were doing in class.

In a follow-up critique, the Parent Trainers commented that they did not work as hard as they should have in getting their Group 1 parents out to attend meetings. However, it is unclear what single factor or combination of factors may have contributed to more interest and attendance in Group 1. What is clear is that many mothers did make occasional use of the group, but they did not sustain their involvement enough to permit the real coalescence and development of a viable group. They were prevented in doing so for several reasons. In the first meetings when mothers presented practical problems, the Trainers' nondirective response probably discouraged at least some mothers from placing confidence in the group to help them, and thus they

did not return. Later, the one mother's domination of the group curtailed the others' sustained interest. Nevertheless, the fact that some mothers made continued though irregular use of the group indicates it did serve some, probably supportive function for them.

In the second series, Group 5 was conducted by the same team of Trainers in the same center with a group of father and mother pairs using the Language Development approach and for pay. The Trainers made a more concentrated effort by repeated home visits to get fuller participation in Group 5 than in Group 1. Of all 15 couples invited, nine families were represented, including six fathers. Of the six families who did not participate, three did not because the father worked at night, and the fact that we emphasized the couples' attending together. In two other cases, where the mother did attend, the father also did not participate much or at all because of a work conflict. Sometimes the father had two jobs and sometimes was assigned to an evening shift. Of the three other non-participating families, two families told the Trainers on home visits that they would attend, but never did; and one family could never be located.

Group 5, covered the Language Development topics of colors, shapes, letters, numbers, and story-reading. The Trainers began the topic by demonstrating materials to the parents, and then in the same meeting provided the parents with sample materials to practice with themselves and also to take home to their children. At the next meeting the parents would review what their children did, bringing in samples of their work, e.g., "My Own Book," illustrating colors. Parents felt they did not have time outside the meetings to make any special materials needed, for instance, flash cards for letters. Thus, time was spent in the meetings for the preparation of these materials. One set of an expensive, commercial educational spin-and-match toy was circulated among the parents and was quite well received. The presentation of the numbers and letters was arbitrary rather than grouped; that is, the first half of the numbers, then the second half; the first third of the letters, the second third, and then the third third.

The parents noted that their children liked the games, lessons, and materials they brought home. In fact, there was such interest that squabbles among the children regularly ensued. The underlying issues sometimes surfaced as problems in themselves; namely, how much time does or can the mother devote to her children, and how much time does the father? And how is sibling rivalry handled? The Trainers recommended dealing with the sibling quarrels in a practical, straight-forward manner, noting the developmental needs of each of the children. Things had progressed so well that in the later meetings, more challenging tasks were presented, cutting shapes from sponges and making mobiles, yet these tasks were cleary too difficult for the parents to perform, and they complained. Few individual problems of the children were brought up by these parents, and these were academic (e.g., short attention span, difficulty in learning), rather than emotional.

Finally, Group 5 ended with a party, and the parents were outspoken in their praise of the group, feeling their children had done better in school because of their home activities with them. They said their children were sad they would not be attending more meetings. As one of the Trainers summarized, "The Group 5 parents demonstrated a marked increase of feelings of competence themselves. One could see in the group the satisfaction they obtained by becoming more familiar with the basic tools of language. The feeling of competence in and of itself, I am sure, promoted increased interactions at home." Also, the parents felt the program should be continued in their center in the following year.

Comparatively, Groups 1 and 5 were conducted at the same center in the same year with the same team of Trainers. The very similarities of the two groups makes the difference in the parents' responsiveness more dramatic. Two groups were different in membership, content, payment, and experience of the Trainers. Of all the possible factors responsible for the differences between the two groups, the latter, the Trainers' lack of experience in Group 1, seems to be the most single important factor. Much like the parents they described, in the second

series the Trainers seemed to feel that they themselves were more competent, took more satisfaction, and were more relaxed, promoting increased interactions in their group.

Trainers CD and CX:Groups 2 and 6

Group 2 had the least continuity of staff from the pre-group evaluation to the group meetings, and it required two full meetings of orientation before they could begin to work with Language Development. Full participation came near the end of the second meeting in discussing the problems of rats in their homes. The Trainer asked, how do you pull yourself and your children out of this situation, to which the mothers responded, education. Then the group settled down to the self-chosen task of writing the alphabet, having dismissed the topics suggested by the Trainers of colors, shapes, and incidental teaching. Besides writing the letters of the alphabet, Group 2's Language Development topics included size, shape, colors, expression of feelings, and much attention to story-book reading techniques. Mothers were encouraged to bring materials on which they worked with their children. If they did not bring the materials, they were asked to talk about what they did. Only a few mothers clearly did not work with their children at home.

At the Christmas season, the mothers helped their children make a greeting card, and held a Christmas party including all their children, and for which they brought much food. In spite of this very good beginning for this group, there was sharp attrition in attendance following the Christmas holiday. The fact that this group was so cohesive before the holiday break renders more plausible the mothers' own explanation why attendance suddenly fell off: There were two rapes and three murders in the neighborhood in New Year's week, many had to work over the holiday and wanted to rest, there was a very hard rain on the night of the first meeting in 1970, and some Parent Project checks that the mothers received were not good. This was because check books were stolen, and the checking account was closed. The latter incident,

more than anything else, broke down the feelings of trust and commitment of the "marginal" members in the group, who possibly might have been able to make the transition at Christmas if the check incident hadn't occurred.

Group 2's meetings developed into the format of spontaneous conversation at the very beginning, language development review and new exercises, and free discussion at the end. The free discussion evolved through topics such as the objectives of these child-oriented meetings, the mothers' own lives' objectives, sex education, the use of two languages, the drop-off of attendance following Christmas, the mothers' irritation that the center was closed over the holidays, and the group's termination. After the first few meetings, the mothers expressed how surprised they were at the experience of working closely with their children--how much the children knew and that they, the mothers, should have helped before. The topic of helping the children to express feelings elicited the mothers' own expression of feelings that were frequently ones of sadness about not achieving their own lives' full potentials.

At the group's termination the Trainers helped the mothers to express both their positive and negative feelings about the group and its scheduled termination. For example, one mother described how she showed her seven-year-old how to read story-books to her five-year-old, and the two worked beautifully.

In summary, Group 2 was the most successful group in terms of both objective and subjective indices, so that it might be considered as a model for future groups, including by chance both the strutured language development skill-area and the in-depth personal feelings area.

Group 6 had some staff turnover, as one Trainer discontinued after five meetings. The new Trainer, however, had done interviews with these mothers, and so little disruption occurred. Group 6, to which all mothers were invited, used the Sensitivity-Discussion hybrid in perhaps the best example of it. Group 6

was large and spent the first two meetings on objectives, limit-setting, and topics such as punishment of children, sex education, and husbands' irresponsibility, before the ice was broken. In the next meeting, a mother described how her husband died, her child was seriously injured, and she was cheated financially both times because of a lack of legal knowledge. She openly cried, and the group rallied to her support with both practical advice (Legal Aid, etc.) and emotional support. Another mother, a neighbor of the first, was surprized to learn of this, which prompted the exploration of "living with people but not knowing them."

Next, the group returned to the topic of the roles of the husband and wife, aided by a solitary husband who came because "his wife was sick." Then, the group dealt first indirectly, then directly with the Lamar, S.C., busing incident, the court-ordered school teacher integration in Miami, and the underlying feelings about the white-Black issue. In the most heated of these meetings, all three Trainers were present, a young Black female and a middle-aged Black female, and a young white male. The two Black female Trainers, who disagreed in their opinions, served as excellent role models. and practically all the mothers present freely engaged in expressing themselves. Next, the two languages issue was debated, but no final resolution was reached.

In the next meeting, encounter group techniques were used because the group seemed comfortable and cohesive enough to attempt it, one of the Trainers felt prepared enough, and the group seemed at rather an impasse with "outside"issues and should have moved to the level of more personal feelings. Suffice it to say that the encounter techniques worked very well with those who participated in all of the sessions, but there were problems raised on the re-entry of old group members. The brief encounter group experience tends to confirm our belief that it would have been hazardous if not disastrous to attempt in a new group. In the on-going group, it facilitated the process to arrive at a deeper level (or higher level) of progress toward our objectives than would have been attained

using the National Training Laboratory techniques alone.

In his summation at the conclusion of the year's program, Trainer B gave a very intriguing critique: "My overall feeling is that you can't get down on paper the smiles in the mothers' eyes and on their faces over their new found ability to communicate with their children and neighbors. The group helped the mothers to feel good about themselves and to be able to see themselves as agents of change."

Group 6 seems to be the most successful group using the unstructured Sensitivity-Discussion approach, and it involved two variables from the most successful group using the structured Language Development approach. A highly competent Trainer, Trainer B, who was both active and flexible, using a hybrid of training approaches, combined free discussion with Language Development in Group 2 and encounter group techniques with Sensitivity-Discussion in Group 6.

Trainers EF: Groups 3 and 7

Group 3 used the Language Development approach with mothers and fathers. Again the parents insisted on writing the letters of the alphabet as their children were doing in school, rather than working on the more primary skills such as color and shape discrimination, etc. Again, the Trainers skillfully provided the parents with what they wanted, and then went back to, and wove in the primary skills. The Trainers made use of Sesame Street booklets and language arts exercise material from the children's classrooms.

The Trainers, a Black male and a Black female, were two exceptionally warm and out-going individuals, who engaged the parents with a very informal joking manner, putting the parents at ease. In the second meeting, for instance, following some joking comments about how strange it was to be in front of a blackboard, the parents took turns in demonstrating how to print the letters of the alphabet. Group 3 spent much time in role-playing various kinds of parent-child instructional interaction, like incidental teaching making "My Own Book," and a story-book reading. The parents themselves took a very active role in correcting each other or giving helpful advice. As an indication of the

group's cohesiveness, the parents organized and ran two Christmas parties: One at the school with the children, and another at one couple's home on a Saturday night complete with the trimmings for a Saturday party. The parents organized and did the work for both parties, and invited the Trainers as guests.

The parents brought up a number of problems outside of language development, including general child-rearing issues, medical service for the children, and safety precautions at the school. The Trainers dealt with each simply and effectively. The parents were encouraged to make liberal use of praise or reinforcement when their children made a correct response or did something good. A Head Start medical and dental team was brought in to answer the parents' questions.

For the final meeting, the parents decided to bring in their children to"perform" whatever they liked best to do. Although there was an undeniable element of showing off one's own child to impress one's neighbor, so many had to perform that they had to cooperate, taking turns, and it turned out quite nicely, not only for the children, who did well, but also for their parents who helped them.

In contrast to Group 3, which started briskly and maintained a high degree of interest for its duration, Group 7 began much more slowly. Group 7 also involved both mothers and fathers, but used the Sensitivity-Discussion Method, and had less initial participation than Group 3.At the first meeting, only two couples appeared, so the Trainer had to go out and arouse more interest. This group was dominated by two fathers with the topics mainly on community problems and general situations,such as school integration, police relations, drug problems, delinquency, owning guns, jobs, attitudes of bus drivers, and scalping prices of ghetto stores. At one of the last meetings, neither dominant father was present and the group moved deeper into family and personal feelings than ever before in the group. One of the Trainers summarized his frustration at the group's not having realized more family-oriented objectives:

"As long as the parents are discussing problems or issues that involve their families there is more interaction. Whenever there are community affairs there is less contribution from the group because, some member of the group is less informed. Occasionally the parents would allow certain members of the group to talk of their own personal lives (job positions) whether it's of interest or not. When trying to bring about a group interaction for positive changes in the family structure, the basic discussions for interaction should have involved children, father and mother attitudes, and behavior."

However, it should be pointed out that the non-dominant parents were happy to participate in the community-oriented meetings. Indeed, one of the active fathers was subsequently elected to a neighborhood political office.

Trainers GH: Groups 4 and 8

In tandem with the preceding Groups 3 and 7 of fathers and mothers, Groups 4 and 8 were held at the same centers with the mothers who had no partners. As discussed earlier, in the first series, Group 4 attempted to use the Sensitivity-Discussion Method, yet due to poor planning, there was a maximum of 12 invited mothers, and there were no more than three or four mothers at any meeting so there could be little meaningful interaction. The discussion items ranged from disciplining children, to school programs, to Christmas shopping, to job supervisors. Interestingly, when considering the choices of disbanding the group, or continuing, the three regular attenders steadfastly chose to continue by themselves.

Eight mothers who did come or said they would come were repeatedly asked back without success. Follow-up interviews documented that two mothers discontinued because they were sick, and when they recovered they had to work extra to make up for the loss of income. There was a great deal of sickness in the community at that time. One mother said her children were sick, one mother had to work late, and another said she had to attend church revivals and meetings. Three additional mothers candidly said they would like to attend, but when they got home from their job and finished the work around the home, they were

too tired or just didn't feel up to par. These mothers without husbands in the home appear to be overwhelmed with day-to-day coping and just did not have the health or energy to attend the Parent Project meetings, even for pay. In conclusion, these mothers who initially expressed interest gave reasons for not attending that sounded very plausible for the most part.

The final group, Group 8, again the mothers without husbands, used Language Development, and had the second highest cohesion. With the exception of two unusual dropouts and two latecomers, this group would have had the highest cohesion of any group. As it was, it was a close second to Group 2.

The sequence of this group largely paralleled the other Language Development groups but followed the Parents Trainers' Manual more closely than any of the other groups beginning with color, shape, and moving on to letters. However, these Trainers provided many more tasks and tasks that were more varied in nature than the other Trainers provided. It is not possible to detail all the exercises and demonstrations here. A few examples will suffice. There were pronunciation exercises (incidentally, without going into the one-language versus two-language issue), films on communication, language puzzles and games, singing and rhythm exercises, and a creativity task using Peter Rabbit stories. To show how successfully the Trainers involved the parents, another example: Peter Rabbit books were given to all parents who were divided in two groups. One parent group brought home the books with cut-out characters to read to their children and encourage them to play with. The other parent group brought home only the cut-out characters from the books and told their children to make up stories which they wrote down. The next week the two parent groups compared notes.

As a whole, the parents were very consistent in carrying out assignments and bringing their children's work back to the group to be discussed. When the majority of the parents were actually observed working with story books with their children, they seemed to exemplify favorable qualities important when

helping children. One mother, however, did not practice what she preached or what she had said she did with her child at home. While her assignments indicated that she took time and helped her child with assignments, when working with him in the group situation she constantly cursed and belittled him because he was not meeting her expectations in the task he was doing. She praised his efforts very little and had mostly negative remarks to make about his efforts. The other parents were patient and understanding when seen working with their children.

The meetings usually started late because many of the parents worked all day and found it difficult to make the meetings at the scheduled time. In general, Trainers and parents established good relationships. The meetings helped each of the group members to become much better acquainted, and parent-parent and parent-Trainer relationships and interactions were sincere and meaningful. Parents were really great when it came to giving each other a feeling of being worthwhile. They continuously praised each other's children's work when assignments were being discussed.

One of the Trainers concluded that the meetings were really worthwhile in helping the parents work more effectively with their small children on language development, not just the child in Head Start but other small ones in the family also. The mothers said they look forward to the meetings, and that now their children feel that their mothers can do something to help them as well as their teachers. Now their children looked up to them more, and this made the mothers feel very good.

Analyses

Attendance-group process data comparison. The two sets of data, attendance and group process, coincide closely with each other, especially on six of the eight groups. The two possible exceptions were Group 1 whose rather poor attendance does not reflect some of its positive interactions, help, and meaning to some mothers; and Group 7 whose rather good attendance does not reflect the relatively impoverished personal content.

Mother-father comparisons. Neither the quantitative attendance data or qualitative group process data indicate any advantage or disadvantage to any of the three classes according to marital status and fathers' participation: All mothers, mother-father pairs, and mothers without husbands. A possible exception was the mothers without husbands Group 4, in which they invidiously compared themselves to Group 3 which met in the same Center; however, Group 4's relatively small size seems to have been more important than the fact that they were husbandless.

The comparison of mothers' participation with fathers' participation using the group process information confirms the earlier offered mother-father attendance comparisons. That is, given an equal chance to participate, fathers took advantage of all phases of this opportunity as avidly as the mothers.

Language Development-Sensitivity-Discussion comparison. The comparison of Language Development with Sensitivity-Discussion seems clearly to favor the former. All four Language Development groups attained good attendance and good qualitative ratings, while only one of the Sensitivity-Discussion groups attained a good rating on both critoria. The reason for less success with the other three Sensitivity-Discussion groups varied: Group 4, which came the closest to complete failure (yet even it did not), was the victim of poor planning based on inaccurate initial estimates of probable participation. Groups 1 and 7 suffered from the Trainers' lack of experience and training, respectively. Therefore, there appears to be interaction between the method (including both structure and content) and trainer variables, such that less well trained and/or experienced trainers fare better with the Language Development method.

Roles and functions of the inservice supervisors. Each of the two inservice supervisors were limited in the roles to after-the-fact analyses of situations that could not be lived over again. Their task was an easy one if the Trainers had performed competently, and the groups had progressed smoothly, requiring mainly positive reinforcement from the supervisors. If, however, there were problems, the task was

much more difficult.

For example, one of the Trainers in Group 2 performed well below expectations. She was a highly recommended parent who had demonstrated her community leadership. Furthermore, during the preservice training, she showed an overt willingness to participate and made positive contributions to the group while, probably significantly, remaining somewhat guarded personally. More significantly, she failed to complete her share of pre-group research interviews. When Group 2 began, her own attendance was irregular; and, in fact, she made disruptive comments. Repeated supervision efforts failed, and then her previously guarded personal crisis erupted: One of her teenage daughters ran away from home. Finally, she acknowledged her own need for outside help. She elected to seek counseling from her minister and resigned from the Project.

More generally, when the inservice supervision uncovered problems in the Trainers' performance, the supervisor's task was to use the past episode as a learning device to equip the Trainers to handle future situations more effectively. The Trainers varied a great deal in their responsiveness to such guidance which required them to generalize from the past situation to a future and somewhat different situation. The Trainers whose personalities could be characterized as open, flexible, and self-reliant, seemed able to learn the best from what supervision had to offer.

Trainer variables. In the final analysis, it was the Trainer selected, his personality, his prior group experiences, his preservice training, and then his actual experience with these parents, that made the most difference whether a particular group went well or not. Eight of the nine individual Parent Trainers appeared quite effective but varied somewhat in the level of their effectiveness. The Trainer

whose two groups were most effective was relatively experienced in groups prior to the Parent Project, and in his personal approach he was active and flexible, somewhat modifying each method in the direction of the other method as it seemed appropriate. When the unexpected arose, he dealt with it openly, immediately, and in a professionally expert fashion. When the unexpected confronted the other three teams, the Trainers often remained passive and had to return to the issue at the next meeting after consulting with their supervisor. This sheds light on the difference in the results of the two methods, for in the Language Development method, the unexpected occurred less frequently. With Language Development, the Trainers knew what to expect and, perhaps, were a bit more at ease, thus setting the parents at ease more than with Sensitivity-Discussion.

With the experience of the first series behind them, the Trainers seemed even more effective in the second series. In the most successful groups, including three or four of the four of the Spring groups, the enthusiasm of the parents and the Parent Trainers' excitement over the parents' responsiveness were mutually contagious. In short, morale was very high when we ended the parent meetings on the scheduled date.

Discussion

Were parent groups effective or not in arousing and sustaining these parents' interests, and why or why not? Cautioned by the pessimistic results and forecasts of most comparable undertakings, we used every reasonable technique to engage parents of Head Start children in meaningful participant group interaction. The criteria of success for this project are fivefold, and only two criteria or indices are considered here: namely, the parents' attendance at the meetings, and the group process. The results of the other criteria are reported elsewhere. In a sense, the most objective data regarding the parents' in participating is their actual attendance at the parent group meetings. From the index of attendance, six of the

eight groups appeared clearly successful, and a seventh group (Group 1) moderately so. From the index of group process, six of the eight groups appeared to sustain a high degree of relevant interest among the parent participants, with a seventh group (Group 7) in the marginal zone. Only Group 4 was a failure on both criteria and this was because of a quasi-administrative planning error: Not inviting enough parents to make up a large enough group, which was a mistake attributable to our lack of experience.

The two marginal groups are worthy of special comment. Group 1, while having low attendance and group cohesion, had loyal enthusiasts who found the meetings relevant and sometimes very helpful, but who attended somewhat irregularly. Group 7 had discussion that was community-, rather than personal- or family-oriented, and appeared to very dependent on a few spokesmen who presided, freeing the rest of the group from the responsibility to really participate. Thus, this group had little group interaction, yet it had moderately good attendance, apparently due to the spokesmen's charisma or interest in the community topics being discussed. Therefore, five of the eight groups clearly met both the criteria of attendance and group process and two more met at least one of the criteria accounting for seven of the eight groups. In summary, according to the attendance and group process data, the Parent Project may be considered a success.

If it was a success, why was it in comparison with reports of other Head Start programs for parent education and consultation? First, there are no other systematic reports of this type, and very few even anecdotal reports. Educational and mental health professionals are concerned that low-income parents of children in Head Start and day care be "dealt with" somehow, but they convey an attitude of incapacity to involve the parents meaningfully, as Belfer (1971) recently observed. Caldwell states, "We lowered our expectation of what we had hoped to accomplish in our parent program and have patiently followed the lead of the parents as to what they expect

from us and what they will accept labelled as democratic" (1970, p.). Even in reports of apparently successful Head Start parent group education, the consultants appeared to relate to individual parents, rather than engender interaction among the parents to make the group the primary vehicle for change (Cook, 1968; Farley, 1971). Compared to a traditional, rather authoritarian approach, Caldwell's more pessimistic attitude implies that--however impatiently--she at least respects the parents' right to practice self-determination of neighborhood programs for their children. Dumont (1968) makes a compelling affirmative case for the community's retaining its own self-determination in a possible power showdown with professionals.

The Parent Project demonstrated that participant group methods are at least one way of unraveling the gordian knot posed by the need to involve low-income parents in meaningful parent education and their demand for a democratic process that avoids professional condescension. Interestingly --and perhaps not entirely coincidentally-- nutritional and health education for Head Start parents are two very important potential applications of the history of group methods in which one of pioneer experiments used group discussion methods to change housewives' attitudes toward using more fresh milk, cod liver oil,and orange juice (Lewin, 1943). Indeed, the Office of Child Development is currently upgrading its health education for parents and sponsoring experimental variations of Head Start known as Health Start and Home Start. Future endeavors should include other field intervention research projects using participant group methods, which systematically investigate effects of variables that were beyond the scope of the Parent Project, such as, using the children's classroom teacher or aide as one of the Parent Trainers, using the Social Services worker as one of the Parent Trainers to confront community-level problems, or using particular content like family nutritional, health, and dental education curricula.

As Zurcher (1969) found in the development of Topeka poverty program neighborhood action committees, the Parent Project groups combined elements of all three Tuckman-

classed settings: therapy groups, human relations groups, and natural or laboratory groups. Zurcher, who carefully observed without disrupting or intervening in the naturalistic setting, noted that only one of the 12 Topeka committees reached the "Purposive" or "Performing" stage of group growth.

However, the Parent Project's primary emphasis was on systematic intervention, and, in fact, the groups evolved quickly, telescoping several Zurcher stages, bypassing the pre-group Orientation of the parents (I), Focusing on the task from the outset (III), and avoiding Limbo by meeting intensively for a time-limited period (V). In the Language Development groups, Catharsis (II), Action (IV), and Testing (VI) were promptly dispatched and followed with Purposive (VII) or Performing the task, while several Sensitivity-Discussion groups spent most of their time in these three earlier stages.

The Parent Project intervention strategy provided trained leadership, prior to starting the actual parent groups, which was indigenous to the community (see Figure 2). In this sense, the Parent Project's preservice training was highly comparable to earlier programs' use of T-groups to train low-income paraprofessionals and middle-class individuals together in the same group (Culver, et. al., 1969; Carkhuff and Griffin, 1970, 1971). But the earlier programs ended at just the point where the main intervention of the Parent Project began, namely, to use the individuals who received the initial preservice training to themselves be the Parent Trainers in the eight groups involving 119 parents. Thus, the Parent Project's intervention strategy was an interdependent whole in that the Parent Trainers' selection, preservice training, inservice supervision, and commitment, equipped them to be competent in the actual parents groups. The Trainers then received positive feedback directly and indirectly from the parents which had an upwardly spiraling effect on the Trainers, permitting them to give their fullest commitment to the parent groups. By the same token, the group training equipped the parents to be more effective with their children. The

parents then received positive feedback from their children which had an upwardly spiraling effect on the parents' involvement in the group.

What role did the five dollar per meeting payment have in securing and maintaining the parents' initial commitment, and their commitment throughout the course of the meetings? The payment should be seen as an incentive for the parents to participate regularly, that is, securing their initial commitment. It is to be seen in the context of the entire Project and especially the interpersonal relationship established between a parent and the Trainers. By paying the parents to participate in the meetings, we tangibly demonstrated our conviction that both mothers and fathers are important. The most valuable function of the payment may have been to render the Project, personified by the Trainers, as more credible. As the parents who we served trusted us, they could and did seem to take their roles as parents more seriously and gain in self-esteem as persons.

If this analysis is correct, then the payment of money functioned as a rapport-building, concrete token. Therefore, in terms of establishing rapport, the Trainers could and did many other things, including listening sympathetically, praising them for actively participating, and sincerely expressing admiration for the good jobs they did with their children. Ultimately, the most important kinds of feedback that the Project sought to initiate for the parents were from the other parents in the same situation, and from their own children. The interpretation that the payment was a rapport-building token is supported by a comparison of pre- and postintervention attitudes about participation in group meetings. In samples of parental attitudes in the Parent Project's five neighborhoods concerning the participation in parent group meetings without payment, there was an increase of about 19% from the spring of 1969 to the next year, about two months after the Parent Project ended (Wohlford, 1971a). Therefore, the Project seems to have made a favorable impact on the community, not only in its acceptance and endorsement by parents who actually participated in it,

but also in the greater willingness to participate expressed by nonparticipating parents. In short, when it ended, the Project had a positive momentum in the community, and if it had continued, the participation could have been expected to be even greater than it had been.

In future projects, perhaps the rapport between the parents and Trainers may be initially established by some means other than payment, such as in the pre-group interviews, or inclusion of teaching or medical staff in the group, so that the payment reinforcement step could have been short-circuited. However, in retrospect concerning this project, we feel that the importance of payment varied within our sample as a function of socioeconomic class. The very poor, e.g., those mothers without husbands, on welfare, and employed at physically exhausting day's-work, probably would not have attended without the financial incentive. In contrast to the very, the moderately poor to lower-middle-class, e.g., intact families, payroll jobs, employed in non-physical jobs like secretaries, etc.,

probably would have attended the meetings even if no payment were offered. This conjecture warrants further study.

Since both the Language Development and Sensitivity-Discussion groups had some success, neither approach can be ruled out, although the more structured Language Development Method appeared slightly more advantageous, especially for less experienced Trainers. As planned for research purposes, each Trainer team conducted both a Language Development group and Sensitivity-Discussion group in the two separate series, so as to reveal possible differences in the approaches. In practice, the Trainers were relatively free to modify the approaches as they wished, and occasionally they did. For instance, both the highly structured Language Development approach in Group 8, and the much more open-ended Language Development approach in Group 2 appeared to achieve very good results. Clearly, it was the personalities of the Trainers that account for much of this variance, and for even more of the variance among the four Sensitivity-Discussion groups.

The group structure and the father's role deserve special comment, as low-income parents, especially fathers, of preschool children are often characterized by many Head Start field workers as virtually impossible to involve in parent programs. In comparing the Parent Project with other programs concerning fathers, it may be concluded that a program's expectations probably determine whether or not the fathers participate. If a program regards fathers as important members of the family and important persons in the child-rearing process, then it should make every effort to encourage the fathers' participation. We assumed that convenience was important for the mothers and doubly important for the fathers, so we had the meetings held at the Head Start center in their own familiar neighborhoods, often within walking distance from home, and on weekday evenings when most people were free. We assumed that continued participation would depend upon the mothers' comfort in the group and doubly so for the fathers. Therefore, we had at least one Black mother from the

community as a Trainer in each group, and one male (usually Black) as Trainer in each fathers and mothers' group. We furthermore assumed that the marital relationship should be strengthened, and that the fathers should not feel outnumbered by women. Therefore, we structured groups involving fathers to include only married couples as partners. In order not to neglect mothers without husbands in those centers having the mother-father groups, we arranged a separate series of meetings for them. Our strategy to involve fathers and mothers appeared to work quite well, as among parents who attended at least one meeting, fathers participated as avidly as mothers.

Recommendations for other programs. The participant group method seems to be an effective vehicle to deliver community-clinical psychological services directly to low income parents for educational, remedial, and preventive functions for their preschool children and the parents themselves. The following recommendations are offered for other applied programs for parents of preschool children:

1. The participant group's diagnostic-classification value and its potential for treatment, or change of behavior, of the participant have been clearly demonstrated. Group experiences may involve the participants in a meaningful way for providing a relevant sample of behavior, and the basic impetus for change comes from an acceptable reference group, others in the same situation.

2. In order to be successful, a parent program should be totally geared to serving the parents' needs, including convenience of meeting time and location, babysitting, etc., as well as in the content of the program.

3. If payment is not available to aid in establishing rapport with at least those parents in hard-core poverty, other fairly unusual procedures probably are necessary to develop their trust and understanding in order to participate initially in a parent program.

4. In order to involve fathers to a program for parents, meetings should be scheduled in the evening, have at least one male trainer, and include as many fathers as mothers in the group.

5. Once the parents are there to participate in a group, whether or not they continue depends on the skill of the Parent Trainers. As discussed earlier, the Trainers' effectiveness is an interdependent function of their selection on the basis of personality and prior group experience, preservice training, supervision, as well as the situation in which they are with the parents, including working in teams and being free to choose their preferred group approach and to exercise their own individual style.

6. Whatever objectives are to be pursued with the parents with either should be stated in behavioral terms and embedded in highly specific experiences and concrete examples. In Language Development groups, the parents are often quite insecure and anxious about their homework assignments with their children. Involving the parents in actually making materials, while discussing their use and their children, is a good technique to follow. Similarly, in Sensitivity-Discussion groups, abstractions about child-rearing are not as valuable as pursuing concrete examples that the parents bring up about their children.

7. Although the Parent Project dealt exclusively with low-income Black families with preschool children, participant group methods also seem appropriate for most other low-income target populations in a variety of programs such as adult education, community mental health, etc., as well as preschool child development. Modifications are in order for certain types of groups. E.g., in the case of families with school-age children who have problems, one or more families including all the children might participate (cf. Minuchin, Montalvo, Guerney, Rosman & Schumer, 1967).

8. At a minimum, supervisors should have had experience themselves in conducting regular sensitivity training groups, in working with low-income groups, in counseling parents, and in rendering clinical services to preschool children and their families. Also, organizational experiences is desirable to help the supervisor cope with potential policy and practical issues concerning the interfaces among relevant Head Start components such as Parent Involvement, Social Services, Psychological Services, and Education.

9. Since the Parent Trainer is the key ingredient of the Parent Project, certain more specific recommdendations are offered regarding his or her role in future applied group programs that use less than fully credentialed trainers. Indeed, the Parent Project may be primarily viewed as a program for the training of "paraprofessionals," which is a term not used in this report because of its connotation of second-class or inferior status. Everyone, including the supervisors, must respect the valuable and unique role of the Trainers. (1) Future programs should anticipate that some Trainers will drop-out during their preservice training and include Alternate Trainers in the preservice training. (2) Trainers should be used in terms of two, not only to permit the ethnic and sex distribution of Trainers for every parent group, but also to facillitate the Trainers performance in the group. A pair of Trainers provide support for each other, cover some of each other's blind spots, and facillitate inservice supervision by promoting a nondefensive, problem-solving attitude for the parents' welfare. (3) The continuity of Trainers from year to year should be maximized for high quality groups in a regular program. The first series of Parent Project meetings in part constituted on-the-job training giving them real preparation for the second series of meetings.

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Footnotes

1. (Page one) The author is indebted to Mrs. Margaret Darden, Mrs. Leona Eldridge, Mrs. Jean S. James, Mr. James M. Kolarik, Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips, Mr. Irving D. Strachan, Mrs. Nancy Thompson, Mr. Joseph A. Trunfio, Mrs. Birdie White, and Mrs. Maxine R. Wooten, who gave of themselves as Parent Trainers and made the Parent Project possible. The author wishes to thank Miss Helen Stolte, Miami Head Start Project Manager and Mrs. Gracie Miller, Associate Director of the Economic Opportunity Program, Inc.; their respective staff of Head Start and Child Opportunity teachers and aides; and the Dade County public school superintendents and principals whose cooperative assistance was essential and always given. Finally, the author wishes to thank Dr. Herbert M. Dandes, the Associate Investigator; Mrs. Leslie H. Danford, Dr. Thomas O. Hilliard, Dr. John W. McDavid, Dr. Carl E. McKenry, and Dr. Virginia Shipman for their suggestions and support throughout the project. The Parent Project was supported in part by a research grant titled, "Changing Parental Attitudes and Behavior Through Participant Group Methods," from the Office of Economic Opportunity (CAP CG-8003) to the University of Miami, for which the author was the Principal Investigator.

2. (Page one) /Please see removable cover page./

3. (Page one) The extent of the Head Start commitment for parent involvement may be seen in the fact that four of the twenty-some official policy statements in the "Rainbow Series" of pamphlets are devoted to the participation of parents: No. 5, Volunteers in the Child Development Center Program; No. 6, Parents are Needed: Suggestions on Parent Participation in Child Development Centers; No. 10, Points for Parents: 50 Suggestions for Parent Participation in Head Start Child Development Centers; No. 10a, Parent Involvement: A Workbook of Training Tips

for Head Start Staff.

4. (Page three) Since the inception of the Parent Project, the group movement has tremendously gained in popularity both among professionals and in the general population. As with any sudden popularization of a complex phenomenon, there have been distortions, excesses, and abuses, as critics within, and outside the group movement have pointed out (Lakin, 1969; Koch, 1969). Oversimplifications of group approaches often fail to distinguish among significant differences between Sensitivity Training, as practiced and described by those at the National Training Laboratory, on the one hand, and the Encounter Groups, as practiced by those at Esalen Institute, on the other. There are many sub-types and variations of group method between these two polar types and beyond them as well. With the exception of a few weeks' experiment with encounter techniques in Group Number 6, the only explicitly implemented small group methods were the sensitivity training or T-group methods.

5. (Page six) The preservice sensitivity training and the inservice supervision of the Parent Trainers was conducted by the Principal and Associate Investigators, and the preservice language development training was conducted by Mrs. Leslie H. Danford who was assisted by Mrs. Jean S. James.

6. (Page seven) While some Trainers developed a strong preference for one method or the other, all Trainer teams used one method in the first series and the other method in the second series, as required by research considerations. As with choosing Trainer partners, complete self-selection of the method by the Trainers may have been preferable for optimal motivation.

Table 1
Characteristics of Parent Training Groups

Period/Series	Group Number	Center	Parents	Method	Payment	Traine
Fall/ Series I	1	Center 1	All mothers	Sensitivity-Discussion	No Payment	AB
	2	Center 2	All mothers	Language Development	Payment	CD
	3	Center 4	Father-mother pairs	Language Development	Payment	EF
	4	Center 4	Mothers without husbands	Sensitivity-Discussion	Payment	GH
Spring/ Series II	5	Center 1	Father-Mother pairs	Language Development	Payment	AB
	6	Center 5	All mothers	Sensitivity-Discussion	Payment	CX
	7	Center 3	Father-Mother pairs	Sensitivity Discussion	Payment	EF
	8	Center 3	Mothers without husbands	Language Development	Payment	GH

. Trainers A, C, and E are male; the others are female. Trainers A and C are white; the others are Black.

Table 2

Objectives at Three Levels as Formulated by the Parent Trainers

Locus of Objectives	Objectives
Trainers' Objectives	1. To accept the parents by being non-judgmental. 2. To be accepted by the parents.. 3. To make parents feel comfortable to be open.
Parents' Objectives	1. To accept the child as an important individual person. A. To spend time alone with the child. 2. To show the child you care. 3. To set responsible limits. 4. To explain situations to child. 5. To understand your feelings about the child and to ex them constructively. A. For the parent. B. To model for the child.
Children's Objectives	1. To feel himself to be an important individual person. 2. To feel good as a person. 3. To do things, to say things on his own, and to feel g it. 4. To express his thoughts.

Table 3
Parental Attendance at Parent Training Groups

Group Number	Center	Method / Number of Scheduled Meetings	Parents	Number Invited			Number Attending At least one Meeting			Number Attending Regularly[a]			Median No. of Meetings Attended[b]		
				Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot
1[c]	Center 1	Sens-Dis 13	All mothers	23	0	23	12	-	12	4	-	4	2	-	2 (1-1
2	Center 2	Lang Devel 15	All mothers	25	0	25	13	-	13	13	-	13	12	-	12 (6-1
3	Center 4	Lang Devel 15	Only father-mother pairs	26	26	52	9	9	18	8	4	12	10	6	8 (4-1
4	Center 4	Sens-Dis 15	Mothers without husband	12	-	12	6	-	6	2	-	2	4	-	4 (1-1
5	Center 1	Lang Devel 15	Father-Mother Pairs	15	15	30	9	6	15	7	1	8	11	3	8 (1-1
6	Center 5	Sens-Dis 15	All mothers	35	0	35	27	5	32	16	-	16	9	(1)	9 (1-1
7	Center 3	Sens-Dis 12	Only father-mother pairs	20	20	40	7	7	14	5	5	10	8	8	8 (3-1
8	Center 3	Lang Devel 16	Mothers without husbands	18[d]	-	18	10	0	10	7	-	7	13	-	13 (2-1
Totals for groups				174	61	235	103	27	130	62	10	72	9.5	6	8
Totals for individuals				155	61	216	95	27	122	60	10	70			

a. Number attending regularly means attending at least half of the scheduled meetings.
b. Numbers in parenthesis are the ranges of numbers of meetings attended.
c. All Parents were paid five dollars per session except in Group 1 (Center 1, Fall Series) in which they participated completely voluntary basis.

Table 3
Parental Attendance at Parent Training Groups

Center	Method / Number of Scheduled Meetings	Parents	Number Invited			Number Attending At least one Meeting			Number Attending Regularly[a]			Median No. of Meetings Attended[b]			Media Atter dance Meeti
			Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot	
Center 1	Sens-Dis 13	All mothers	23	0	23	12	-	12	4	-	4	2	-	2 (1-10	3 (1-7
Center 2	Lang Devel 15	All mothers	25	0	25	13	-	13	13	-	13	12	-	12 (6-14)	11 (4-13
Center 4	Lang Devel 15	Only father-mother pairs	26	26	52	9	9	18	8	4	12	10	6	8 (4-14)	9.5 (4-1
Center 4	Sens-Dis 15	Mothers without husband	12	-	12	6	-	6	2	-	2	4	-	4 (1-14)	2 (1-4
Center 1	Lang Devel 15	Father-Mother Pairs	15	15	30	9	6	15	7	1	8	11	3	8 (1-14)	7 (5-1
Center 5	Sens-Dis 15	All mothers	35	0	35	27	5	32	16	-	16	9	(1)	9 (1-14)	13 (9-2
Center 3	Sens-Dis 12	Only father-mother pairs	20	20	40	7	7	14	5	5	10	8	8	8 (3-10)	9.5 (4-1
Center 3	Lang Devel 16	Mothers without husbands	18[d]	-	18	10	0	10	7	-	7	13	-	13 (2-16)	7 (5-8
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s for individuals			155	61	216	95	27	122	60	10	70				

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mbers in parenthesis are the ranges of numbers of meetings attended.
11 Parents were paid five dollars per session except in Group 1 (Center 1, Fall Series) in which they participated on a ompletely voluntary basis.
ncluding four mothers from Center 4, three of whom attended no meetings in the Fall.

Figure 1

The Usual Entry of a Young Child from Low Income Family Into Public School: The Burden is Placed upon the Child Alone.

Figure 2

The Parent Project's Intervention Strategy Reverses the Burden, Placing it Back on Adults. The School and Head Start Reach out into the Community for Group Trainers Who Work Directly with Parent Groups to Strengthen the Family. The Family then Modifies its Interaction with their Preschool Child.

Note: Shaded areas & numbers:

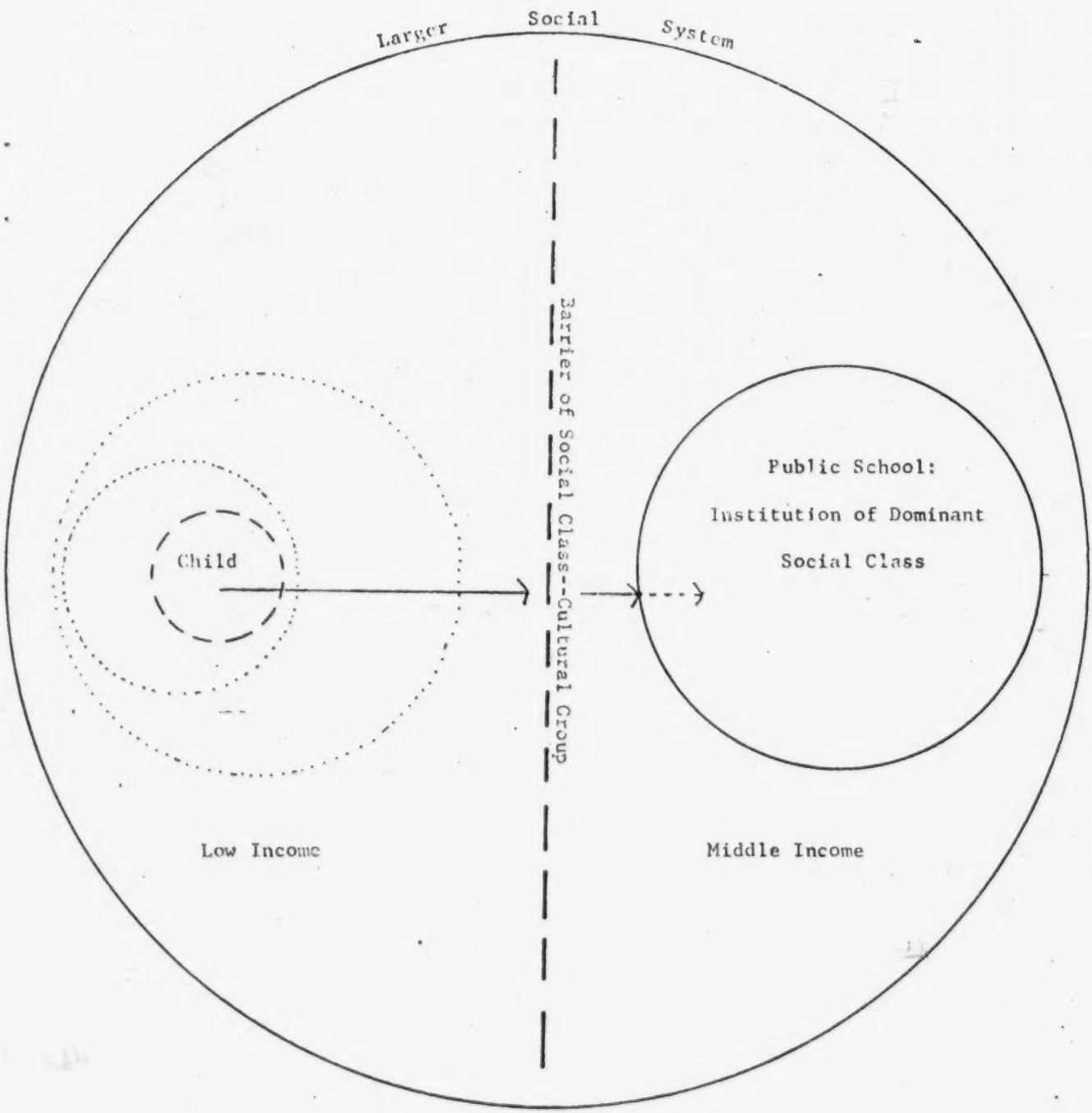
1. Public school-Head Start contract.
2. Head Start's preservice training & inservice supervision of Parent Group Trainers.
3. Parents' Group conducted by Parent Trainers.
4. Parents modify their family interaction.
5. Preschool child is better equipped for Head Start and public school.

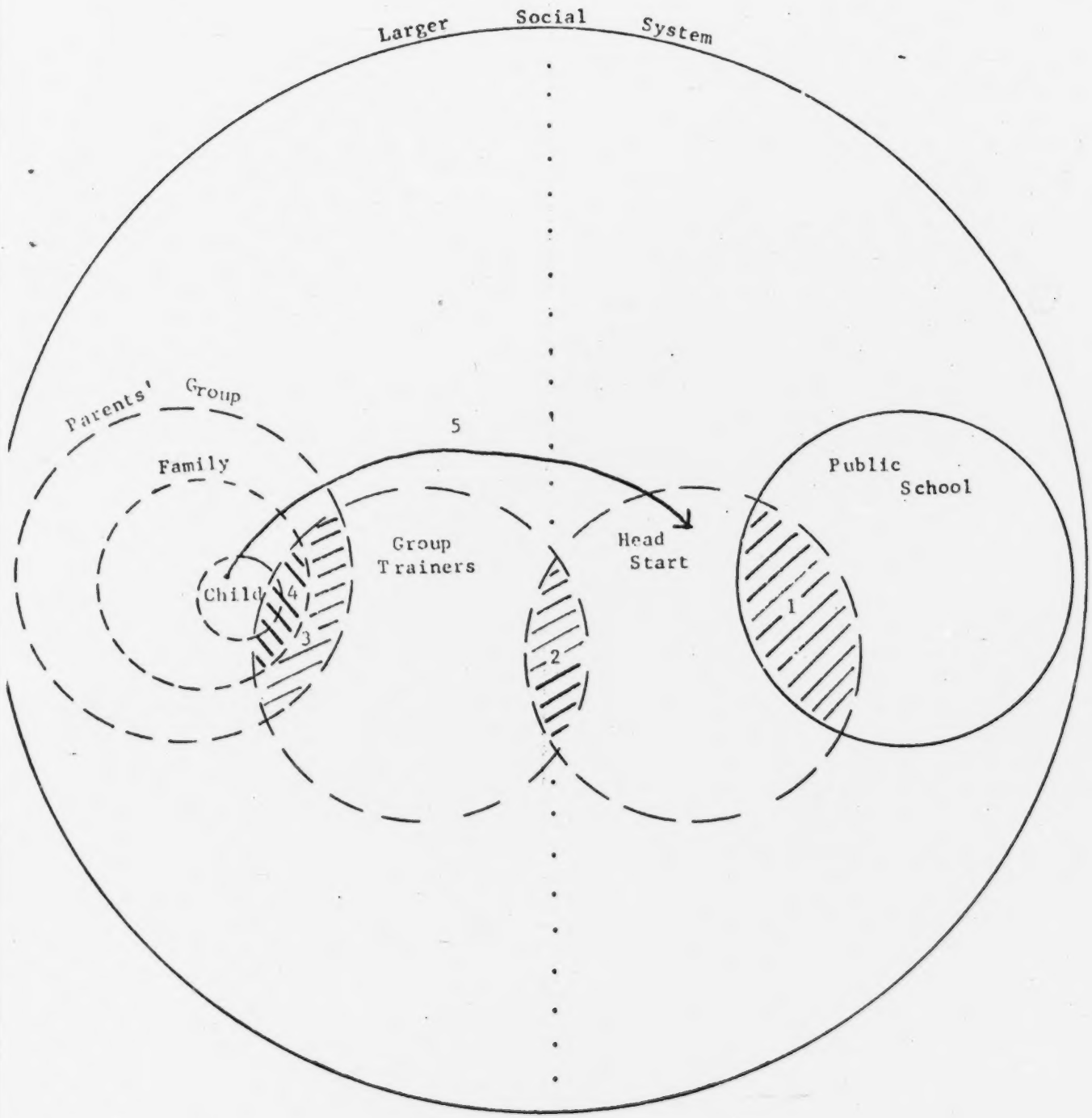
Figure 3

Goal of Interventions: Moving All Units into Closer Harmony with each other (Functional Interdependence)--Including the Child, his Family, the Neighborhood Parent Group, Head Start, and the Public School.

Figure 4

The Parent Project's Intervention Strategy Conceptualized According to Input, Intraprocess, and Outcome Variables.


Larger Social System
Barrier of Social Class--Cultural Group
Child
Public School:
Institution of Dominant
Social Class
Low Income
Middle Income


Larger Social System
Parents' Group
Family
Child
Group Trainers
Head Start
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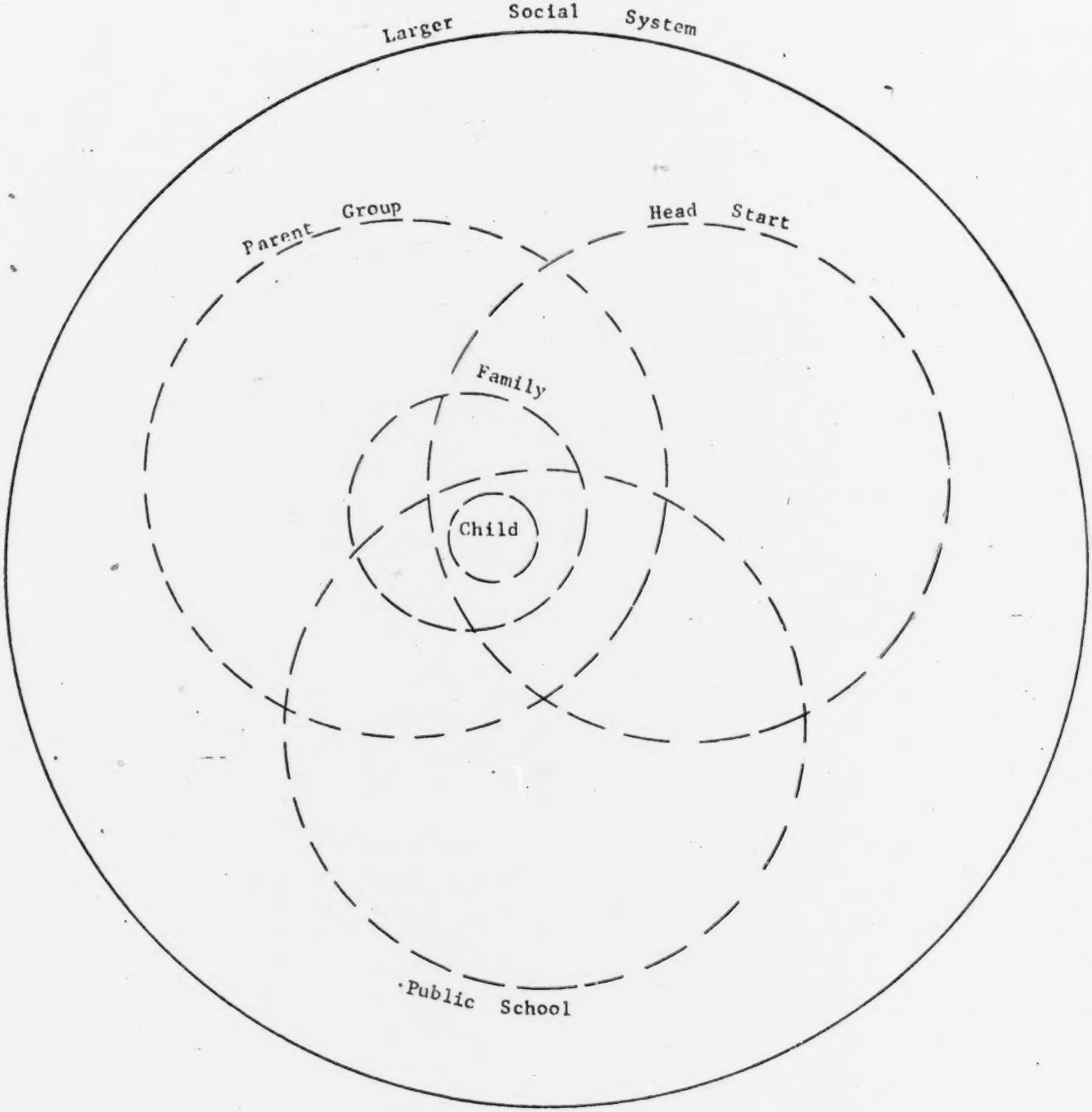
Larger Social System
Parent Group
Head Start
Family
Child
Public School

Input Variables:
Critical Elements within Strategy

- Trainer behavior--personality, prior group experience, pre-service training
- Behavior of supervisors--pre-service training and supervision
- Concurrent research efforts--visibility, stated purpose, procedures
- Contract--e.g., payment took risk out of it
- Length of time
- Composition of group--demographic, personality, interests
- Nature of task and degree of structure used to pursue task work

Intraprocess Variables:
Processes that Increase Likelihood of Participant Commitment to Process and Eventual Positive Outcomes

1. Support from peers
2. Cohesion
3. Child reinforcement
4. Competence in group setting and in home child-parent interaction setting

Outcome Variables:
Goals of Parent Project (see also Table 2):

Goals of Program Sponsors:

1. Learn conditions necessary for viable parent groups
2. To render a valuable group service to these parents
3. Study objective changes in parents and their children

Goals or Valued Outcomes for Participants:

1. General: Help parents and their children relative to Head Start objectives
2. Slight temporary increase in money and feelings of worth that come from earning
3. Feeling of connectedness with others
4. Reinforcement that effort and participation can work (or opposite)
5. Increased competence and feelings of competence in child-rearing or playing supporting role in child' education

Unintended Outcomes, Favorable and Unfavorable:

See text for description in the Results; e.g., self-comparison of Groups 3 & 4